881 304 for the Nkunas near Leydsdorp. They have a special word for the physical operation, *yimba*, (in Ronga *soka*) which is used together with *ngoma* (Sutho *goma*), the generic term for all the customs connected with it. (It must not be forgotten that the word *ngoma* is also used for other initiations, especially for the initiation of widows, as will be seen in Chap. II.)

881 175 304 Amongst the Ba-Ronga, circumcision was abandoned more than a hundred years ago, before the arrival of Manukosi, and they were called *Ba-butoya*, the cowards, by other Northern clans, who said they feared the sufferings of that cruel school. Mboza has seen some old Ronga men who had been circumcised probably at the begining of the XIX^th^ Century. It is well known that somewhat later Chaka put a stop to the custom amongst the Zulus; it did not fit in with the new military system inaugurated by him. When the Ngoni general Manukosi invaded the plains of the Low Country, it is not surprising that circumcision disappeared in those clans also. The constant fighting which prevailed in those troubled times did not allow men to stay three consecutive months in a circumcision lodge. It was feared also that circumcised boys would be killed by the enemy, being unable to run away in case of an invasion. But old men in the Bilen country assert that the *Ngoma* is a very old custom amongst the Thongas, and that it has long been practised by all their clans.

881 177 363 304 Is it possible to ascertain its *true origin*? My informants, Viguet especially, were convinced that the Ngoma was brought to the tribes of the Northern Transvaal by the *Ma-Lemba*, and it is a historical fact that, as regards the Ba-Venda of that country, the rite was adopted quite recently under the influence of the Ma-Lemba. These Ma-Lemba are a very curious people, living amongst the Thongas and the Suthos of Zoutpansberg, just like the Jews amongst the European nations, without a chief, without national unity, but with characteristic customs to which they adhere from generation to generation... They resemble the Jews in the fact that they do not eat flesh unless all the blood has been first carefully drained away. They dread eating blood above all else, and they shave at each new moon. They brought with them

1: Junod M-5 .(1895-1909)1927 Thonga

881 177 663 the metallurgic art and introduced domestic fowls into the country. All these facts tend to show that they have had intimate relations with Semitic peoples, and they themselves declare that they came from the North by sea and reached the coast after shipwreck. Now they practise circumcision with great assiduity and hold a special position in the lodges of the Spelonken. They are called there the masters of the Ngoma (1). Circumcision is wide-spread amongst Semitic nations, and one might be tempted to infer from these remarks that the custom has been taught to the Bantus by Semitic masters. This is certainly true as regards the Ba-Venda in the Spelonken (2).

In South Africa the Ngoma is much older than the arrival of the Ma-Lemba (which can be fixed some time during the XVIIIth century). What happened in Spelonken, through the agency of the Ma-Lemba, during the XIXth century, may have taken place at some earlier date in the case of other South African tribes, and the Semitic origin of the Ngoma is quite possible, though there is no proof at present extant.

2) General characteristics of the circumcision rites.

881 115 I am treating here of the rites as they are met with amongst the Thongas of Spelonken especially ; my informants on this point have been Viguet, who was initiated some 60 years ago, and Valdo, a much younger man, who went through the rites 30 years ago; both are from Spelonken. There Thonga and Bvesha (Sutho) candidates enter the same lodges. A boy named Pikinini revealed to me the secret formulae as they are recited amongst the Nkunas (Leydsdorp). The rites certainly vary amongst the tribes and they seem to have been simplified in late years, but there is a general resemblance between them all. Pedis have two circumcision

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(1) I note in a paper by the Rev. W. A. Norton on the puberty rites of the Basuto (S. A. *Journal of Science* March 1910) that, if a Bushman is in a lodge, he takes precedence amongst the Suthos and that there circumcision is derived from the Bushmen just as it is from the Ma-Lembain the Zoutpansberg.

(2) See my paper on the "Balemba of the Zoutpansberg" *Folklore*, Sept. 1908 and also, "*Zidji*," my South African novel. Chap. II. (Saint-Blaise, Foyer Solidariste).

On their way back, they had carefully to watch a certain bird called *hwati*, fish-eater; if this bird flew in the right direction, homeward, it was a hopeful sign. If it emitted its cry *kwekweru-kweru*, (kweru means at home), or if it settled on the crown of a hut, then the travellers were happy and shouted their joyful *mikulungwane*. On the contrary, if any member of the company had died on the road, another bird, the *magudjwana*, would come and perch on the crown, with a tired air and drooping head... Then there were tears instead of shouts of joy!

These great commercial expeditions were superseded later on by the *trade in skins* which the Ba-Ronga conducted, bartering them in the interior for powder or other European produce. I knew one Native who organised regular expeditions to Bilene, where he bought the skins of civet-cats with which the Zulu warriors delight to deck themselves. Thence he went into the hill country of the Swazis, or Zulus, to sell his merchandise. It was reported that he obtained scores of oxen in exchange for his precious nsimba skins. The last time, however, the venture did not turn out well, and it has not been attempted again.

Native trade, fifty years ago, consisted also in selling *wax*, and *rubber*, and tons of *nkampfi* (mafureira almonds) to the business houses at Delagoa, (the supply of ivory was exhausted years ago), but this trade has fallen off almost entirely. My impression is that Native commerce has greatly diminished during the last fifty years. So the fact is evident that civilisation, which at first gave a decided stimulus to the commercial spirit of the Thongas, has latterly almost entirely destroyed their trade. How has this been done?

One reason for this decrease in Native commerce may be found in the advent of a large number of Asiatics, Banyans from Goa and Bombay, who are past masters in the art of shopkeeping, and who set up in business wherever they consider there is a sufficient population to warrant the venture. Living very cheaply (rice and curry are their staple food), in any kind of shanty, selling at enormous profits, keen at making bargains, these people

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1 II D.10.2., Traders--analysis

439 monopolise the retail trade throughout the country, and the
563 Natives are quite unable to meet this competition; they have consequently almost entirely given up all their earlier attempts at business transactions! (1)

167 A second reason why the trade of former days has almost
439 entirely disappeared is to be found in the *great economic changes* resulting from the fact that Lourenço Marques has become an important seaport, in close relation with the miners of Johannesburg who receive their supplies via Delagoa Bay. Thousands of Natives are employed in discharging the large steamers which arrive by hundreds in the roadstead. At this work a Native can earn fifteen shillings a week or more; in a short time he has made ample provision for the wants of his family and no longer finds it necessary to go to Bilene, to Zululand or Swaziland to make a living. The women too can make money by selling tomatoes and sweet potatoes to an ever increasing White population. All this is much easier

439 (1) On one occasion, in 1892, I made a list of various articles displayed for sale
292 in and around a Banyan shop, in the district of Mahazule (to the North of Nondwane). This is what Mr. Nala, a Hindu from Goa established for many years amongst the
765 Rongas, offered to the Natives living in the neighbourhood of his primitive store.

584 *Stuffs.* These are sold by measurement taken on the individual; say, by the *shikumba*, length of one arm, or by the *nkumba* or *bemba* (two arms), or by the *peça*, the entire piece, the equivalent of two bemba. The materials most in demand are called; *tingidao* (white), *mashita* (black with white stripes), *shilandana* (all red), *shinwakana* (red and black), *mempana* (a special red stuff worn as mourning) and *malopa* (a navy blue material still more frenquently worn as mourning). Besides these are *handkerchiefs* (minturu) of various colours, principally red, a large proportion coming from the manufacturers of East Switzerland; white *blankets (gampongo*, meaning snow), for three or four shillings; coloured blankets, thicker, varying from five to seven shillings; towels, called *thawula* (an adaptation of the English word) and even some articles of ready-made clothing such as *djansi* (overcoats) at fifteen shillings! Amongst the stuffs I would more particularly note the *gangisa ntombi*, that is "for use when courting the girls", dark blue with a pattern of white flowers.

439 *Beads.* There are at least a dozen kinds to be found at Nala's; djiridja (black) mbanda (white), shingazana, shimuzana, nkankana, habo, matshimbarole, bafa, tshambo.

Sundries. Rings, fish-hooks, buttons (masowa), thread, needles, snuff boxes to be worn in the ears (tinhlanga), knives, spoons, balls of string, padlocks (makandjate) with key attached; little chains, to be hung from the belt, which tinkle when walking; bracelets (busenga, ten for a shilling); wooden spoons, combs, coils of fine iron wire; skins; a large trap for catching hyenas or other wild animals; small brass petroleum lamps; sardines at sixpence a tin, English biscuits, and last but not least, a cask of German brandy diluted (tempora) with 50% of water! This would now be replaced by three casks of Vinho colonial, one of white wine, one of red wine and one of I do not know what colour!